

(Approved Minutes)

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL  
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
MEETING OF MARCH 10, 2015**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Jim Tallberg called the Tuesday, March 10, 2015 meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers of the Rocky Hill Town Hall, 761 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, Connecticut.

**Present:** Jim Tallberg, Chairman  
Phil Benoit, Vice Chairman  
Rocco Sanzo, Commissioner  
Neil Geldof, Commissioner  
Frank Simboski, Commissioner

**Also:** Town Manager, Guy Scaife  
Eileen Knapp, Recording Secretary

**Absent:** Jeffrey Thomen  
Kevin Clements

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one was present to speak.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A MOTION was made by Commissioner Simboski to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2015 meeting with changes. Seconded by Vice Chairman Benoit. All were in favor, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**IV. RECEIVE COMMENTS from Members of the Health District's Board**

**Ms. Judy Sartucci, Chairman of the Board of the Central Connecticut Health District (CCHD) and resident of Rocky Hill** addressed the Commission. She and Marty Stiglich were both present as the CCHD representatives of Rocky Hill to give suggestions to possible changes to the Town's Charter regarding the position of the Director of Health. The current language references the Director of Health for the Town's Health Department but in 1996 a Health District was created with Wethersfield, eventually adding Berlin and Newington. She suggested that the following language be added to Section 603:

**“...as the Council may determine by ordinance. Nothing herein shall prevent the Town of Rocky Hill pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes from joining an existing public health district or from cooperating with other towns in the formation of a new health district.”**

Ms. Sartucci said this change would help bring the Charter more in line with State law. The advantage of having a Health District is related to economies of scale. You are able to get a broader range of services that would not be able to be provided by a single Town on its own. She said she believes the level of service provided to the member towns is also of a higher and better quality.

**A MOTION was made by Vice Chairman Benoit to move item 6. Receive comments from Town of Newington Representative up on the agenda, before item 5. Seconded by Commissioner Simboski. All were in favor, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **V. RECEIVE COMMENTS from Town of Newington Representative**

**Mr. Alan Nafis from the Town of Newington was present.** He worked on Newington's Charter Revision and was asked if he could give any advice to this Commission as they go through this process. Mr. Nafis said Newington updated their Charter in 2008 and then again in 2010. The first time he felt the majority party had an agenda and they would have a caucus and then come out and vote on something without consideration of the minority party members. He said there was no cooperation between party lines. The Charter needed to be updated two years later because there things that were not addressed the first time. Mr. Nafis suggested that the Commission keep the politics out of the decision-making process. He said they also asked that department heads come in to offer their input into the Charter update. He said unless people were asking for specific changes in certain areas, they left those areas alone.

#### **RECEIVE COMMENTS from Town of Rocky Hill Town Staff**

**Director of Finance, Mr. John Mehr** was present to give his comments on the Town Charter update. He did submit a list of suggestions to the Commission in their packets along with responses to questions posed by Commissioner Sanzo.

Chairman Tallberg said the Commission also received two memos from Mary Hogan, who is the Library Director, with detailed suggestions for revisions to the Charter. He asked Commissioners to look over these comments and they will add this to the next meeting's agenda for discussion and ask Ms. Hogan to attend.

Commissioner Sanzo said he would like to update the Charter so that they don't have to go to a referendum for small issues and instead have a Capital Improvement Program. If they do have to go to a referendum, he would like the Town to have a good bond rating because that will save the tax payers money when it comes to financing. In order to get a better bond rating, Commissioner Sanzo said they need to increase their fund balance, which is at 5%. Comparable towns are carrying a fund balance from 10-17%, which allows them to borrow for less.

Chairman Tallberg said the Commissioners should have received a March 3<sup>rd</sup> memo from Mr. Mehr with a number of recommended changes to the Charter. Some of the recommendations discussed were as follows:

- Consider increasing the 5%-6% fund balance requirement –an increase in the fund balance would give the Town a better bond rating. Many Towns address their fund balances through the use of a policy. Surrounding towns' fund balances range from 10-20%. There was a discussion of how to increase the fund balance from 5 to 10%. This may not be something that needs to be in the Charter, it could be handled by creating a policy.
- Increasing the obligatory referendum amount from \$150,000 to a higher amount – The \$150,000 keeps elected officials from out of control spending but it also makes it difficult and time consuming to purchase smaller capital improvement items. There was a discussion about what the appropriate referendum amount would be.
- Dollar amount at which point the Town must go out to bid- right now anything above \$10,000 must go out to bid; Mr. Mehr suggested raising that threshold to \$20-\$30,000.
- Effectiveness of the Public Building Commission- there are so many different committees involved in construction projects, it may be easier if one committee oversees a project from beginning to end, adjusting the number and composition of the public Building Commission, the Council elects this Commission but doesn't have to abide by their recommendations, elimination of the Public Building Commission. The Commission decided to invite someone from private industry to the next meeting to share their experiences in working with Towns during construction projects.
- Increase the amount of time for the closing of the book, right now it is 60 days.
- Change the requirement that the Tax collector must be an elector from town.
- Updating the Charter language as needed, especially as related to technology.
- There was a discussion of whether or not to allow the Board of Ed. Commission to submit their budget at a later date.
- Inclusion of a budget adoption date in the Charter.
- There was a discussion of whether or not the Board of Education should be able to maintain and control their own surplus of funds in a capital improvement account. Right now excess funds are kept under the Town's control

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting will be on March 25, 2015 at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

**A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sanzo to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Simboski. All were in favor, MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

**Charter Revision Commission  
Meeting of March 10, 2015**

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Eileen A. Knapp  
Recording Secretary